

King Block
204-214 Bellevue Avenue
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-332

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
40-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

KING BLOCK

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RI,
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40-

Location: 204-214 Bellevue Avenue.

Present Owner: Fred W. Caiger, Agnes M.A. Caiger, and James and Britta H. Saravo.

Present Occupants: 204, Louis' Beauty Salon; 206, Frank Hogan's Newport Seed and Bulb Supply Co.; 208, Ye Viking Shoppe; 210, Garzo Ladies Apparel; 212, Wiseman's Art Store; 214, Cabbages and Kings.

Present Use: Commercial.

Statement of
Significance:

While interesting as a very dignified and restrained solution to commercial building problems in the late 19th century, the King Block is particularly significant as one of four buildings that comprise a distinguished commercial street, the east side of Bellevue Avenue beginning at Memorial Boulevard and running south. The first building, the Travers Block, was also the first built, in 1870-1871, designed by the architect Richard Morris Hunt. The second building, physically the largest and historically the best known, is the Newport Casino, built 1880-1881, McKim, Mead, and White, architects. The King Block is the third building of the group, and the final one is the Audrain Building, built 1902-1903, Bruce Price, architect. The four buildings maintain a long street line, and are basically related in scale and massing, in their broken silhouettes and richly textured surfaces which provide, at the same time, a great variety and liveliness. Without matching, the buildings complement each other in a particularly urbane way, forming an ensemble which should be preserved.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

This building is located in Plat 29, Lot 57. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, (LEB.--, p.--).

- 1892 Deed of October 19, 1892, recorded in LEB. 65, pp. 525-26.

From: Daniel LeRoy King by executors
To: LeRoy King, George Gordon King, Mary LeRoy King,
and Edith Edgar King
For: \$50,000

"...parcel of real estate...bounded Northerly by land of Newport Casino, two hundred and twenty three feet, Easterly by land of the late Andrew Freebody, one hundred and twenty six feet, Southerly by lands of John G. Weaver, two hundred and fourteen feet, and Westerly on Bellevue Avenue, one hundred and thirty seven feet... with a dwelling house and all other improvements..."
- 1893 Deed of March 16, 1893, recorded in LEB. 66, pp. 11-12.

From: George Gordon King
To: LeRoy King
For: \$100 plus

"...parcel of land with the dwelling house..."
- 1894 Deed of April 5, 1894, recorded in LEB. 67, p. 327.

From: LeRoy King
To: A.A. Vantine Co.
For: \$1100 for one year's rent, May 1, 1894

"...to lease the premises known as number 204 being the largest in the Block, in the block known as the King Block..."
- 1894 Deed of October 31, 1894, recorded in LEB. 67, pp. 561-63.

From: LeRoy King
To: Carl Berger
For: five year lease, May 1, 1895-

"...all the building in the rear of the block known as the King Block..."
- 1953 Deed of June 2, 1953, recorded in LEB. 182, p. 20.

From: Frederick R. King, LeRoy King, and Ethel King Russell (devisees of LeRoy King)

To: 1/2 to Fred W. Caiger and Agnes M.A. Caiger
1/2 to James and Britta Saravo

2. Date of erection: 1893-1894
3. Architect: Perkins and Betton, 13 School St., Boston, Mass.
4. Builder or contractor: Mr. J.W. Underwood
5. Original plans: None known
6. Alterations and additions: There have been no visible exterior alterations to the building. The open storage space above nos. 206 and 214 has been converted into apartment-showrooms. The apartment above no. 206 is presently used for storage space. The apartment above no. 214 is used for a special private showroom and occasionally for sleeping space.
7. Important old views: Architectural rendering of facade, by Heliotype Printing Co., Boston, 1894. Newport Historical Society.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

C. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Records of Deeds in the Newport City Hall.
2. Secondary and published sources:
Newport Mercury, December 10, 1892, p. 1.
Newport Mercury, May 20, 1893, p. 1.
3. Likely sources not yet investigated:
King family papers.

Prepared by Thomas M. Slade
University of Notre Dame
Project Historian
August, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The King Block is a finely

proportioned block of commercial stores similar in style to the Queen Anne commercial buildings of suburban London of the same date.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 130 feet by 75 feet; rectangular plan; 6 bays with the two central bays slightly taller and stepped forward a few inches; 2 stories.
2. Foundations: Foundations are masonry.
3. Wall construction: Exterior wall is brown pressed brick. The side and rear walls are pressed brick with limestone window trim.
4. Structural system: The walls are brick load bearing, with brick party walls separating the shops.
5. Chimneys: A brick chimney at the rear services the heating plant.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Each shop has a wide Dutch door located to the side of the display window.
 - b. Windows: Each shop has a large bow plate glass window. A round window is located in each of the center gables.
7. Roof: Each shop has a gable roof. Stepped brick courses decorate the eaves.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: Limestone steps lead to the recessed entrance door.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The floor plan of each shop is a long rectangle. Each shop has received different interior treatments according to the needs of the tenants.
2. Stairways: At the rear of each shop is located a stairway to the second floor and basement.

3. Hardware: The Dutch doors have fine brass hardware of the period.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The long, 130 foot facade is placed up to the wide sidewalk.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project -- 1970. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby, (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Cervin Robinson, photographer.